

IV COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

The Sacramento River is the largest and most important river in California. The river serves many purposes including water supply for agricultural, municipal and industrial uses, hydroelectric power, navigation and recreation. It produces the State's largest runs of salmon, sturgeon, striped bass and shad and it supports a substantial recreation and commercial fishery off the California coast. The river is vital to the well being of the State of California and determinations regarding the management of the river affect many people.

The preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat along the Sacramento River is an expressed priority of the State of California, the United States and a wide range of private interests in California and the entire country. The Sacramento River Wildlife Area is an important part of this unique habitat resource. Appropriately, the Department is fully committed to a program of coordination and cooperation with local governments, other state and federal agencies, and the wide range of private stakeholders.

❖ **Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum**

The Sacramento River Conservation Area (SRCA) extends along 222 miles of the Sacramento River from its confluence with the Feather River, near Verona (RM 80), to Keswick Dam, just north of Redding (RM 302). The SRCA includes land in Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Glenn, Colusa, Sutter and Yolo Counties. The Wildlife Area lies roughly in the center of the SRCA, between RM 144 and RM 215 and it is limited to Colusa, Glenn, Butte and Tehama Counties. The SRCA is an outgrowth of an effort initiated through State Senate Bill 1086 in 1986. That legislation created an Advisory Council that completed the *Upper Sacramento River Fisheries and Riparian Habitat Management Plan* in 1989. The State Legislature received that *Plan* and directed its implementation through Senate Concurrent Resolution No.62 in 1989. Subsequent to the resolution and related actions, DWR developed the initial SRGIS. The Riparian Habitat Committee of the Advisory Council also conducted an extensive public process that resulted in the completion of the *Sacramento River Conservation Area Handbook* in 1999. The *Handbook* is an important document that established Basic Principles and management Guidelines for the SRCA. The Department took an active role in both the Advisory Council and the Riparian Habitat Committee.

The *Handbook* was developed as the basis for interagency cooperation and agreement on programs within the SCRA. A *Memorandum of Agreement Regarding the Sacramento River Conservation Area* was approved by all of the seven county governments that are included in the SCRA. It was also signed by the key state and federal agencies that are involved in management activities along the river. In the *Memorandum*, the parties committed to endorse the *1989 Plan*, the *Handbook* and formation of a nonprofit organization that would serve a wide range of coordination, liaison and implementation functions within the SRCA. The Department is a signatory to the *Memorandum of Agreement*, which is contained in Appendix J.

The proposed nonprofit corporation was formed in 2000 as the Sacramento River Conservation Area Inc.. The corporation, which now operates as the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, is a functioning organization with a 21 member Board of Directors that includes:

- ◆ One public interest and one landowner representatives appointed by the Board of Supervisors of each of the seven counties
- ◆ A public interest representative appointed by the Director of the Resources Agency
- ◆ Six ex-officio members representing the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Department of Fish and Game, Department of Water Resources and Reclamation Board.

The Department is an ongoing, active participant in the activities of the SRCAF. The representative of the Director of the Department serves as the ex-officio member of the Board and DFG staff members are active in the various committees of the SRCAF.

The *Sacramento River Conservation Area Handbook* specifies the overall Goal for the SCRA:

Preserve remaining riparian habitat and reestablish a continuous riparian ecosystem along the Sacramento River between Redding and Chico and reestablish riparian vegetation along the river from Chico to Verona.

This Goal is supported by a set of Principles, Actions and Management Guidelines that detail a process to reach the Goal. Figure 3 depicts the structure of the SCRAF in a diagram taken from the *Handbook*. The *Handbook* also provides a detailed discussion of the dynamic river processes and the resulting habitat communities. The *Handbook* is available online at the SRCAF website (www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov) and it should be consulted for additional information regarding the SRCAF.

The *Handbook* incorporates other important policy directives. The Inner River Zone Guidelines was established to define an area in which to focus the programs of the SRCAF. The Zone consists of the 100-year meanderbelt, the area in which the river meandered between 1896 and 1991. It also includes the area that river is projected (by DWR) to erode over a 50-year term beginning in 1991. The combined areas of the meanderbelt and the erosion projections define the Inner River Zone Guidelines. The *Handbook* also establishes priorities for restoration of the Inner River Zone. These priorities are:

- Protect physical processes where still intact.
- Allow riparian forests to reach maturity.
- Restore physical and succession processes
- Conduct reforestation activities.

Consistency with the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum Principles - This Plan and the ongoing management of the Wildlife Areas are intended to be fully consistent with the stated Principles of the SRCAF as follows:

1. **Ecosystem Management** – This Plan incorporates an Ecosystem Approach to habitat management. It addresses recovery of Special Status Species through the preservation and restoration of natural riparian habitat. It emphasizes the use of

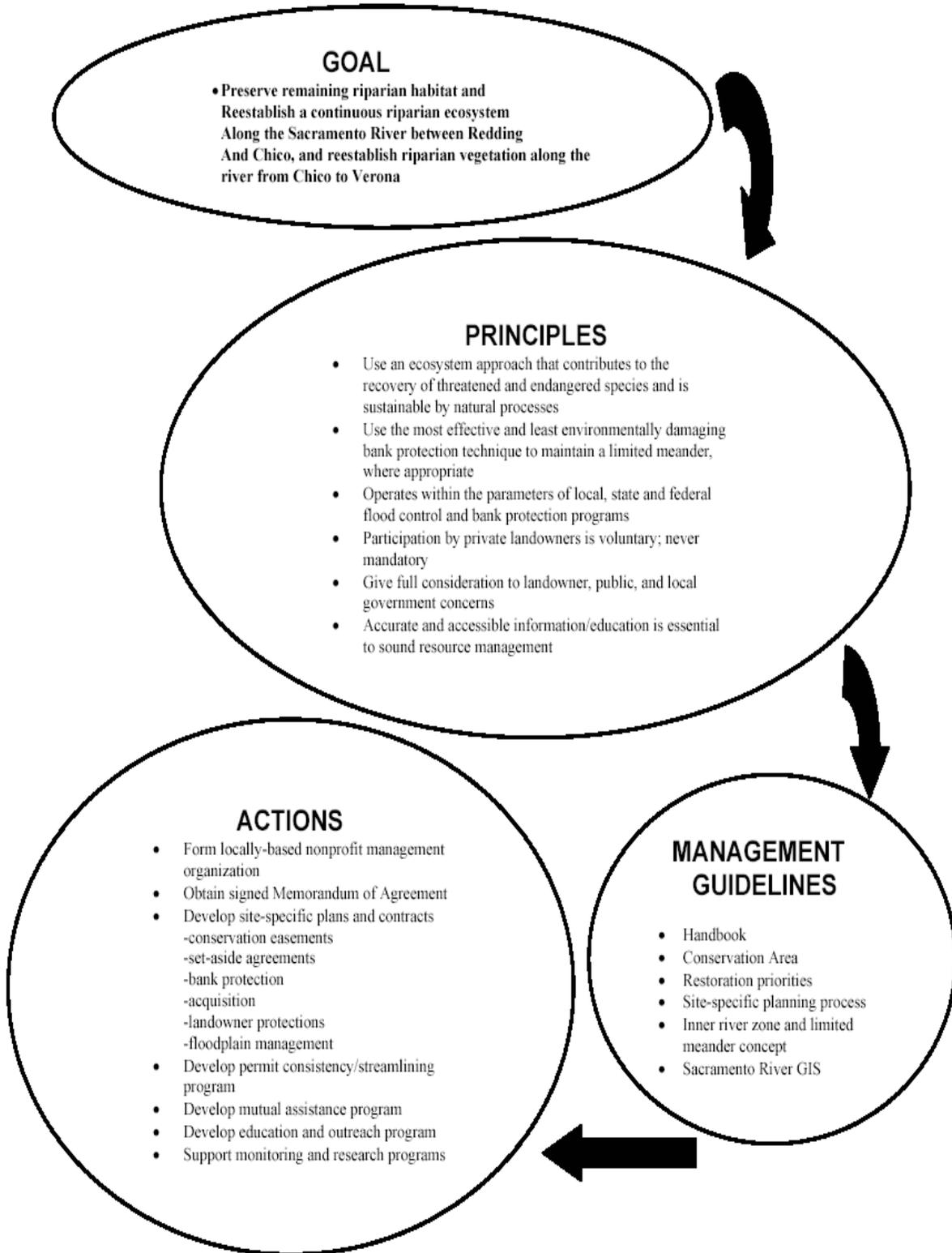


Figure 6. The Structure of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Program

**Illustration from the Sacramento River Conservation Area Handbook.*

natural processes to create a sustainable system within the context of the physical environment, the biological environment and the human environment.

2. **Flood Management** – This Plan gives full consideration to the Sacramento River Flood Control Project and the modified flow regime that now applies to the Sacramento River. All past and any future actions by the Department will comply with the regulations of the Reclamation Board which is charged with maintaining the integrity of the flood control system.
3. **Voluntary Participation – Properties within the Wildlife Areas that have been acquired from private property owners (fee title and conservation easement)** have been purchased from willing sellers at fair market value based on appraisals approved by the State Department of General Services. These properties are highly flood prone areas where frequent inundation and other natural hazards makes other types of land use problematic.
4. **Local Concerns** – The Department is committed to giving full consideration to concerns of other landowners, local government and the general public. Active participation in the SRCAF as well as individual landowner contacts are pursued to help make reasonable accommodations to individual concerns as well as broad issues of shared concern.
5. **Bank Stabilization** - The Department recognizes the dual considerations of promoting ecosystem management through natural river processes and protecting critical facilities and major public investments through selective bank stabilization efforts. It is committed to the SRCA’s Principles and site specific review of individual situations.
6. **Information and Education** – This Plan provides a substantial information baseline regarding the Wildlife Areas that can provide information to other landowners. The Department is committed to working through the SRCAF and with individual interests to share information regarding the Wildlife Areas and other areas of riparian habitat.

The Management Goals for the Wildlife Area, which are in Chapter VI of this Plan, incorporate specific Goals and Tasks that address these Principles.

The Planning Process included an initial information presentation to the SRCAF and the Technical Advisory Committee, periodic updates and a presentation on the draft plan. Interviews were also conducted with five members of the SRCAF Board who represent the counties in which the Wildlife Area is located and the manager of the SRCAF. Copies of the Draft Plan were also provided to all members of the SRCAF Board for their review and input.

❖ **California Bay-Delta Program**

The California Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort of state and federal agencies working with local communities to improve the quality and reliability of California's water supplies and revive the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem. The established mission of the CALFED Program is:

“To develop and implement a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta System”

The CALFED Program is intended to be a balanced, comprehensive approach to reduce conflicts over limited water supplies and to address the Program's four Objectives: Water Supply Reliability, Water Quality, Levee System Integrity and Ecosystem Restoration. It targets the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta, the Sacramento Valley and the San Joaquin Valley. The program in California is guided by the California Bay-Delta Authority, which was established through SB 1653 in 2002. The Bill established the California Bay-Delta Authority to provide a permanent governance structure for the collaborative state-federal effort that began in 1994. The Director of the Department of Fish and Game is a member of the authority and the Department is an implementing agency for a number of programs including CALFED's Environmental Restoration Program, Environmental Water Account and Watershed Programs.

In August of 2000 the CALFED Program issued a *Programmatic Record of Decision* (ROD) that set forth a thirty-year plan to address ecosystem health and water reliability problems in the Bay-Delta area. The ROD specified specific investments and actions over the first seven-years (Stage 1) to meet program goals. Pursuant to the ROD, the *Ecosystem Restoration Multi-Year Program Plan (Years 4-7)* was released in August of 2003. That *Plan* included Restoration Priorities for the Sacramento Region.

Consistency with the Restoration Priorities for the Sacramento Region - This Plan and the ongoing management of the Wildlife Areas are intended to be fully consistent with the Restoration Priorities for the Sacramento Region as specified in the *Ecosystem Restoration Multi-Year Program Plan (Years 4-7)* as follows:

1. Develop and implement habitat management and restoration actions in collaboration with local groups such as the Sacramento River Conservation Area Non-Profit Organization (SRCAF).

The Department has been an active participant in the SRCA since the initial implementation of SB 1086. It is committed to continue to participate in the activities of the SRCAF and to implement the Principles of the *Handbook* in the management of the Wildlife Area.

2. Restore fish habitat and fish passage, particularly for spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout and conduct passage studies.

The restoration of riparian habitat and the related maintenance of natural river processes within the Wildlife Area are supportive of the recovery of Special Status fish species. Fish passage is not an issue on the mainstem of the river, but the impacts of diversions and pumping plants have been an issue in the reach of the Wildlife Area. Apart from the management of the Wildlife Area, the Department is deeply involved statewide with fish passage improvements on tributary streams and the monitoring and evaluation of fish passage.

3. Conduct adaptive management experiments in regard to natural and modified flow regimes to promote ecosystem functions or otherwise support restoration actions.

The Management Goals for the Wildlife Area include the support of research related to modified flow regimes that will be supportive of restoration actions.

4. **Restore Geomorphic processes in stream and riparian corridors.**
 A key element of the ecosystem management approach incorporated in this Plan is the use of natural river processes to create and sustain riparian habitat. Management Goals for the Wildlife Area include multiple tasks that will help to restore geomorphic processes.
5. **Implement actions to prevent, control and reduce impacts of nonnative invasive species in the region.**
 The control of nonnative, invasive species is an important priority in this Plan. Control of invasive species will occur as part of both restoration projects and the ongoing maintenance activities.
6. **Continue major fish screen projects and conduct studies to improve knowledge of the implications of fish screens for populations.**
 While there are no water intakes or fish screen projects in the Wildlife Area, there are intakes and screening projects in the vicinity of the Wildlife Area. The Department is involved in the regulation of fish screens and in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of fish screens on the river and statewide.
7. **Develop conceptual models to support restoration of river, stream and riparian habitat.** The Management Goals for the Wildlife Area include support of research and modeling that provide new information, evaluation criteria and tools to support the restoration of riparian habitat.

The Planning Process included a meeting with the Department staff most closely involved with the CALFED Program and a meeting with the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration staff as well as periodic follow-up contacts. The Draft Plan was also provided to the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration staff for their review and input.

❖ Local Governments

The Wildlife Area includes parts of Colusa, Glenn, Butte and Tehama Counties. Each county is a multi-purpose government structure directed by an elected Board of Supervisors. There are also numerous special districts within each county, which are limited-purpose governmental agencies, such as fire districts, mosquito and vector control districts, irrigation districts and reclamation districts. The Wildlife Area does not include any part of an incorporated city although the City of Colusa is located about one mile from the Colusa-South Subunit.

Local land use policies are established in the general plans of each county, which are adopted by the respective Boards of Supervisors. The four counties' general plans designate the areas adjacent to the Sacramento River for agriculture and floodway related land uses as follows:

- ◆ **Tehama County** - The Wildlife Area is entirely within the "Habitat Reserve" land use designation and the "Primary Floodway" Zoning District. The land use policies of the County General Plan are supportive of the preservation of agriculture and there are also policies regarding conservation of habitat and Special Status Species.
- ◆ **Butte County** - The Wildlife Area property is entirely within the "Agricultural" land use designation and agricultural zoning districts. The land use policies of the County General Plan are strongly directed to the

preservation of agriculture and there is also policy regarding the protection of Special Status Species.

- ◆ **Glenn County** - The Wildlife Area property is entirely within the “Intensive Agriculture” Land use designation and the “AE – 40” Zoning District. The General Plan are primarily directed to the support of agricultural use in the rural area and there is also a policy specifying early consultation for projects involving Wildlife Management Agencies.
- ◆ **Colusa County** - The Wildlife Area property is entirely within the “Floodway” land use designation and the “Floodway” zoning district. The land use policies of the County General Plan are primarily directed to the support of agricultural use in the rural area and there are also policies regarding the value of natural resources.

The Planning Process involved specific outreach to local governments in the four counties that contain portions of the Wildlife Area. A member of the Board of Supervisors from each of the four counties is currently appointed as a public interest representative on the SRCAF Board of Directors. The SRCAF Board received several information presentations on the Plan. Additionally, information presentations were made directly to the various Boards of Supervisors and County Fish and Game Commissions. Interviews were also conducted with the supervisor from each county that sits on the SRCAF Board and the chief planning official in each county. Additional interviews were conducted with the managers of the Glen-Colusa, Provident and the Princeton-Codora Irrigation Districts.

❖ Other Habitat Conservation Programs

The Wildlife Area is intermixed with riparian habitat areas that are managed by other public agencies and private conservation organizations along the river. Close coordination with these entities during both the Planning Process and in the implementation of this Plan was deemed essential. Information regarding the various properties in this section is taken from the *Sacramento River Public Recreation Access Study*, supplemented by information from the various agencies.

California Department of Fish and Game

The Department has four additional properties that are within the SRCA that total 1462 acres. They are located within the NCNCR, a distance of fifty to seventy RM from the Sacramento River Wildlife Area. These properties are:

- Clover Creek Ecological Area – 45 acres at RM 283L.
- Anderson River Park Fishing Access – 264 acres at RM 282R.
- Mouth of Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area - 571 acres at RM 273.5.
- Battle Creek Wildlife Area - 582 acres at RM 274.

These properties are managed by NCNCR. The Planning Process included numerous meetings with the staff of NCNCR and the Region staff reviewed a preliminary draft of this Plan.

California Department of Parks and Recreation

DPR has three properties along the Sacramento River in close proximity to the Wildlife Area that total 626 acres. These facilities are:

- Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area located three miles north of the Merrill’s Landing Unit – 325 acres at 218.5L.
- Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, adjacent to the Pine Creek Unit – 243 acres at RM193L to 200R

- Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation area, which is downstream from the Colusa Unit – 67 acres at RM 144R.

These three sites provide recreation facilities such as campgrounds, nature trails and boat ramps. They also include riparian habitats similar to the Wildlife Area.

DPR was involved in developing a new General Plan for the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park in a time period that overlapped the Planning Process. Members of the two planning teams met on several occasions to discuss matters of mutual concern and shared information in the development of their respective plans and other ongoing opportunities for mutual cooperation. DPR District staff also reviewed a preliminary draft of this Plan.

California Reclamation Board

In addition to its regulatory role, the Reclamation Board has jurisdiction over 14 properties along the river between Red Bluff and Colusa. The total record area of these properties is 1365 acres and the sites are located between RM 145.5 and 192.5. The majority of these properties are riparian habitat. These include mitigation sites and locations where the maintenance of the riparian vegetation was identified as having important channel stabilization and levee protection benefits. (Murray, Burns and Kienlen, 1987).

The Reclamation Board does not have an active habitat management program because habitat management and the provision of public recreation are not part of its mission. No specific policy regarding public use of the sites has been established. The only site that has land access is the former Cruise and Tarry Marina site near Colusa, which is leased by Colusa County. The Reclamation Board's General Manager sits on the SRCAF as an ex-officio member and the Board staff was consulted as part of the Planning Process.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

USFWS manages the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge which currently includes approximately 10,128 acres of habitat and land that is planned to be restored to riparian habitat. The SRNWR is located along the river between RM 163 and 239.5 in a total of 22 separate units. The USFWS has a goal of acquiring a total of 18,000 acres of land for habitat conservation along the river. Much of the SRNWR area is located adjacent to the Wildlife Area and it contains many similar habitat communities.

The USFWS was in the process of developing its Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the SRNWR concurrent with the Planning Process. The majority of the SRNWR is closed to public use pending the adoption of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan. If and when these lands are open to public use, following adoption of the Plan, there will be considerable opportunity for increased public access to both SRNWR and Wildlife Area via access across adjoining property, which is managed by the other agency. The two plans were closely coordinated, many meetings occurred and substantial information was shared between the two planning teams. The USFWS staff from the SRNWR also reviewed a preliminary draft of this Plan.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management administers two parcels of riparian habitat along the river that total 347 record acres. The two properties are Foster Island at RM 217R and Todd Island at RM 238L. Both sites are limited to river access. The Bureau has considered transferring these two properties to the USFWS following the completion of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (EDAW,

2003). The Bureau staff was consulted during the Planning Process, but detailed interaction did not occur due to the potential transfer of the two sites to the USFWS.

River Partners

River Partners (formerly Sacramento River Partners) is a private nonprofit corporation based in Chico, California. The conservation organization focuses on the acquisition and restoration of wildlife habitat. Staff members have also conducted scientific research projects to support the restoration of riparian habitats. River Partners has completed the restoration of 454 acres of the Wildlife Area under contract to the Department as well as restoration projects for other agencies. River Partners currently owns three properties along the river that total approximately 316 acres. The Planning Process included an interview with the President of River Partners as well as subsequent discussions with River Partners staff during the Planning Process.

The Nature Conservancy

TNC is a private, nonprofit corporation that has operated its Sacramento River Project for approximately 15 years. TNC has a permanent science staff at its project office in Chico, California that has managed and conduct numerous scientific research and planning projects along the river corridor. It has completed subreach plans for the Chico Landing and Beehive Bend Subreaches and will initiate the Colusa Subreach planning in 2004. TNC has also been active in the acquisition and restoration of habitat property for ultimate transfer to the Department, DPR and USFWS. TNC currently owns approximately 3100 acres of property along the river, which is planned to be transferred to these agencies for long-term management.

The Department formed a partnership with TNC for the development of this Plan. The Project Planner for the Planning Process was a TNC employee. Other TNC staff members representing ecology, hydrology, restoration science and government relations were additionally involved in the development of the Site Inventory as well as the preparation and review of this Plan.

❖ Memorandum of Understanding with DPR and USFWS

The Department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with DPR and USFWS in 2001 that formally documents the agreement of the three agencies to, “manage, monitor, restore and enhance lands for fish, wildlife and plants along the Sacramento River in Tehama, Butte, Glenn and Colusa Counties.” The agreement defines a Scope of Actions which includes:

- General management
- Public use
- Acquisition
- Maintenance
- Biological data
- Permits
- Law enforcement
- Coordination

The Memorandum of Agreement serves as a basis for many, ongoing cooperative actions, including this Planning Process. Appendix I contains the full text of this document.